

ORM NEWS

From the Office of the
Deputy Assistant Secretary for
Resolution Management
Department of Veterans Affairs



November 2004

From the Deputy Assistant Secretary



Veterans Day 2004 –Honoring Those Who Served

This Veterans Day we once again take a moment to recognize and honor those who have answered the call to military service in defense of our Nation.

Secretary Principi opens his 2004 “Veterans Day Message” by asking “Have you thanked a veteran today? We are blessed, as Americans, to live in a nation gifted with rights and freedoms envied the world over. Those rights and freedoms did not come cheaply. Have you thanked a veteran today?” He goes on to encourage us to “...seize this opportunity and offer our heartfelt “thank you” to America’s former soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, and Coastguardsmen. He reminds us that “Forty-eight million of our fellow citizens earned our gratitude by donning our nation’s uniform” and he closes with “On this Veterans Day, we thank them all.”

I want to personally echo the Secretary’s sentiments and recognize our coworkers who are currently serving on active duty and others of you who have answered the call to serve our nation.

The rights and privileges we take for granted have been won for us and defended by those in uniform – past and present. One of our country’s greatest strengths is the willingness of average Americans to don the uniform and serve their fellow citizens, sometimes at the cost of their lives. This Veterans Day, with Americans once again putting their lives on-the-line; we should take a moment to “Thank them all.”

James S. Jones

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Letter to a Soldier



The following "Letter to a Soldier" was written by India Henson, daughter of Lewis (Lew) Henson, Learning Resources Officer. She wrote CNN earlier this year with the hope it would be published to express her appreciation for those who are serving in harms way. Lew asked that it be shared with our employees.

"I reviewed your web page in the hope of trying to find a way to get this message to our soldiers. It's not really a commentary on the war, but it's more of my heart, hope, and wishes for our soldiers. I hope that someone at CNN will read this and whether by print, airwaves or even a box sent overseas, get this message to them and let them know we care. I don't want my name attached to it - it doesn't need to be; I just want the thought shared. It's called, "Letter to a Soldier." Thanks.

As I look out of the window, the sun descends from my part of the world. Oranges, purples and yellows streak across a pale blue sky. The drone of engines, screams of car alarms, the hums and clicks of office computers shutting down, the everyday sounds of a city at rush hour, bounce around in my head. The blue begins to slip away into black. Peace surrounds me in my part of the world, when, again, you cross my mind.

Turning to the radio, I try my best to dissect its sounds, hypnotized by each rise or fall in the voices. I know that in your part of the world the sun now peels away the darkness that shielded you. Vivid images appear beneath the blurs of yellow and white that hurl across the black sky while you fight and I ponder. Bouncing around in your head are the drone of war machines, the scream of death, the hums and clicks of guns, the unnerving silence of desolation. For you, though the blackness will soon be conquered by morning's light, there's no peace in your part of the world.

I want you to know that since you left, with every rising or setting of the sun I have cried and prayed for you. And even if we never meet, the image of you will be forever etched on my heart.

So, always remember, though you may be afraid, everyday, I whisper to the sky to carry to you strength...and peace.

***With love,
My part of the world"***



Honoring ORM Employees Serving Our Nation in Uniform, Past & Present

Thomas Allen
Barbara Barmes
Charlotte Barr
Zakia Batchelor
David Betts
Jo Ann Blackmon
Warren Bolden
Marilyn Calloway
James Cameron
Billy Cantrell
Paul. Crain
Dan Cuff
Vanessa Deal
Tony Denogean
Patricia Draucker
Tyrone Eddins
Rose Marie Eiza
Deo Engles
Roger Evans
Amber Fisher
Vernet Fraser
Michael Fulton
Gwendloyn Gantt
Waltrunette Gardner
George Randy Garrett
Kenneth Gipson
Charles Gruver
Earl Hatcher
John Henley
Maurice Holman
Troy Jackson
Willy Jenkins
Margarita Johnson
R. Lamont Johnson
Winston Johnson
Charlotte Jones

Gregory Jones
James S. Jones
John Jones
Kimm Lenox
Austin Lewis
Salvador Lopez
Wardelle McClendon
Thomas Maddux
Allen Mitchell
Monty Montesanto
Adin Morales
Robert Moran
Daniel Prater
Norma Reed
Carselia Renard
Earnestine Richardson
Ricky Rowe
William Sanders
Kelley Schafer
John Sequin
Ronnica Snowden
William Suddeth
Robert Talley
Glenn Thomas
Kevin Thomas
Richard Tilden
Diana Torres
Vanessa Dawson-Vaughn
Terry Washington
Herbert Wilkins
Lauri Williams
Claudia Wilson
David Woodly
Jean Zurface
Roxanne Zygmund

Women In Military Service for America Memorial

The *Women In Military Service for America Memorial* is the only major national memorial honoring all women who served in our nation's defense throughout history. Their patriotism and bravery are a part of our nation's collective heritage and are finally recognized in the Memorial through exhibits, film, and the Memorial Register, which guarantees each registered woman's individual story a permanent place in America's history. More than two million women have served in defense of our nation, since its beginning more than 220 years ago. The individual histories of nearly 250,000 of these women come to life in the Memorial Register.

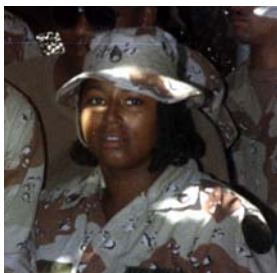


Charlotte Barr

Four ORM employees, [Earnestine Richardson](#), [Vanessa Dawson-Vaughn](#), [Ronnica \(Ronnie\) Snowden](#) and [Charlotte Barr](#) have submitted information on their military service to the Memorial Register. Other women veterans, including those who are part of the ORM family, are encouraged to register to become part of this historical project. For more information on the *Women In Military Service for America Memorial* and to register to become part of this historical project go to <http://www.womensmemorial.org/>.



Ronnie
Snowden



Vanessa
Dawson-Vaughn



Earnestine
Richardson

Veterans Day Q&A



Who is a veteran?

“Veteran” is an honored title which must be earned by military service in the armed forces of the United States. It labels men and women from all walks of life and backgrounds who put their lives on the line to protect our Nation’s freedoms and those of freedom-loving people around the world.

The term Veteran means a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released from the service under conditions other than dishonorable.

What does Veterans Day celebrate? Who does it honor?

Originally, as Armistice Day, it celebrated the end of World War I – the most costly and terrible war up to that time – and the men and women of the U.S. armed forces who helped win that war. Later, as an official federal holiday Veterans Day was set aside to honor all American veterans of war and peacetime.

And though many have died defending our Nation and serving in wartime, Veterans Day’s focus is on honoring the 25 million living veterans among us... our parents, uncles, friends and neighbors – ordinary citizens called upon to perform extraordinary service. On Veterans Day we celebrate their patriotism, service and sacrifice.

Can you name some freedoms that Americans enjoy that we owe to our veterans?

We owe this country’s very existence and all the freedom’s it guarantees to our veterans -- the right to choose our own government through elections; freedom of speech, religion and assembly – even the right to choose not to become a veteran. We owe all our freedoms in some way to veterans.

Do you think we owe a debt of gratitude to veterans because their sacrifices on and off the battlefield have ensured the freedoms we take for granted?

Certainly we owe our veterans gratitude, and much more. They have distinguished themselves through their willingness to risk life and limb in defense of the freedoms we cherish, though sometimes take for granted. I am honored and privileged to lead the Cabinet Department of our federal government charged by Abraham Lincoln to redeem our Nation’s debt to liberty’s defenders. We owe them our full support, and our sincerest thanks, not just on Veterans Day but every day.

Why is Veterans Day celebrated on November 11 at 11 a.m.?

That date and time in the year 1918 – the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month – marked the signing of the Allied and German governments of

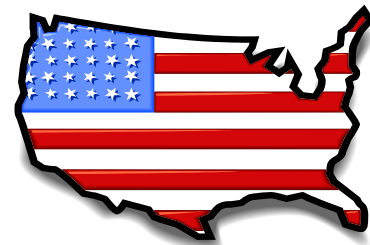
the Armistice agreement that ended World War I, a terrible and costly war that ravaged Europe for four years. That was marked by Armistice Day which later became Veterans Day.

Paint a word picture of the Veterans Day ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknowns in Arlington. Who do you see? What do they do? Tell me what the President does.

The heart of the national Veterans Day ceremony is the laying of a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns exactly on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. The Memorial Plaza on which the white granite tomb rests overlooks the Nation's capital. The Tomb is protected by members of the elite military honor guard 24 hours a day, seven days a week throughout the year regardless of weather conditions. Dignitaries from the federal government and the military and veterans service organizations flank the President in front of the Tomb. At exactly 11 a.m., he steps forward, presents the wreath at the Tomb's base and places his hand on his heart. There is utter stillness and then the honor guard bugler plays the haunting refrain of Taps. It is a poignant moment that symbolizes our Nation's respect and honor for those who have served and the many who have sacrificed.

What does the American Flag symbolize on Veterans Day?

As a federal holiday, all citizens are encouraged to fly Old Glory on Veterans Day. The flag represents the unity of our Nation and on Veterans Day flying it represents a Nation's love and respect.



Can you tell me about the holiday's roots in Armistice Day?

In 1921, an unknown World War I American soldier was buried in Arlington National Cemetery. Similar ceremonies were held earlier in England and France, where an unknown soldier was buried in each nation's highest place of honor (Westminster Abbey in England and the Arc de Triomphe in France). Each ceremony was held on November 11 in honor of the Armistice and the day became known as "Armistice Day." The site of the American "Tomb of the Unknown Soldier" at Arlington became the national focal point of reverence for America's veterans.

Armistice Day officially received its name by Congressional Resolution in 1926. It became a national holiday 12 years later by similar Congressional action. Within a few years of Armistice Day becoming an official national holiday, war broke out in Europe and the U.S. entered World War II. After the war, as early as 1947, communities began honoring the millions of World War II veterans who returned on Armistice Day and many referred to the celebrations as Veterans Day to include those veterans of World War II. U.S. Representative Edward Rees of Kansas proposed a bill to change Armistice Day to Veterans Day. It was passed in 1954 and signed by President Eisenhower. The only other change came in 1968 when Congress passed a law moving the Veterans Day federal holiday to the fourth Monday in October. It soon became apparent, however, that November 11 was a date of historic and symbolic significance to Americans. In 1978, Congress returned Veterans Day to its traditional date.

Office Notes

DAS for ORM Recognized for Support of Employees Serving in the Guard and Reserves

Mr. **James S. Jones**, Deputy Assistant Secretary for ORM, was one of 12 District of Columbia employers recognized on October 27, 2004, for their support of employees serving in the Guard and Reserves. Mr. Jones received the “Above and Beyond Award” presented by the DC Employee Support of the Guard and Reserve. The ceremony took place at Ft. McNair in Washington, DC.



Mr. Jones, center, receives the “Above and Beyond Award” from Felix Boughton, State Chair, DC ESGR Committee. Earnestine Richardson of ORM is on the right.

Customer Service Awards

On Thursday, October 14, 2004, **Cheryl Thompson** (Counselor), **Cheryl Campbell** (Investigator), and **Patricia Johnson** (Administrative Assistant, Office of Policy and Compliance) were presented Customer Service awards by David Betts, Regional EEO Manager, Mid-Atlantic Operations. The recipients were recognized by Brenda Austin, Customer Service Manager, for their untiring efforts to facilitate good customer service initiatives within Mid-Atlantic Operations and ORM Headquarters. Congratulations to each employee for their milestone accomplishments and service to ORM employees.



Cheryl Thompson and Cheryl Campbell with David Betts, Regional EEO Manager, Mid-Atlantic Operations



Patricia Johnson receives her award from David Betts, Regional EEO Manager, Mid-Atlantic Operations

Mid-South Operations

TRIPLE DUTY

Lauri Williams (first from the left), EEO Counselor with Mid-South Operations, is pictured with her triplet sisters Lisa and Lori Clegg. All three sisters have served in the Armed Forces. Lauri, who served in the United States Navy, is an EEO Counselor with ORM. Lisa has served in the United States Army for 15 years and is currently deployed to Iraq. Lori has 15 years of service and is in the United States Army Reserve. She recently returned from an 18 month deployment to Iraq. Recently, the Mid-South office honored Lisa & Lori with a certificate of appreciation and other tokens of appreciation during a staff meeting. Lauri accepted the gifts on behalf of her sisters.



NEW ADDITION

On October 23, 2004, **Eleanor Kaye Wilson**, EEO Investigator, welcomed a new addition to her family. Braylon Roshawn Wilson weighed in at 6 lbs. 7 ozs. and was 19 1/2 inches long. Braylon's father, Bryan, is the son of Eleanor.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Mid-South Operations staff participated in the annual Boone Park Elementary School Fall Carnival which was held the night of October 22, 2004. The staff donated balloons, candy and their time to make the carnival a success. This was the second year that the staff made identification photos and cards for kids attending the carnival to be used as identification in the event of an emergency situation.

Special thanks goes to family members of the staff who assisted; Brenda Cantrell, wife of EEO Counselor Billy Cantrell; Austin Lewis, Jr., son of Austin Lewis, Regional EEO Officer; Kerrigan Ambers, son of Pam Johnson, EEO Specialist, C-1; and Tamara Wilson, daughter of EEO Investigator, Eleanor Wilson. We also thank Brenda Lewis, Director, Customer Service, who volunteered her time; and Dr. Craig Rookey, Chief Mental Health, Central Arkansas Veterans Health Care Center, who donated the picture identification machine for our use.

ARKANSAS BLACK HALL OF FAME

Jo Ann Blackmon, EEO Counselor, Mid-South Operations, assisted the Arkansas Black Hall of Fame with their 12th Annual Induction Ceremony on October 16, 2004, at the Arkansas Statehouse Convention Center held in the Wally Allen Ballroom as one of their Lead Hostess. Inductees named were Fatima Robinson, world renowned dancer and choreographer, Pharoah Sanders, world renowned Jazz Musician, Hazel Hynson, Educator and Musician Extraordinaire, John H. Stroger Jr., distinguished Civil and Political Leader, Posthumous W. Harold Flowers, Pioneering Attorney and Civil Rights Leader and Dr. Patricia Washington McGraw, noted Educator, Author and Humanitarian. The event was Co-Chaired by the governor of Arkansas the Honorable Mike Huckabee.

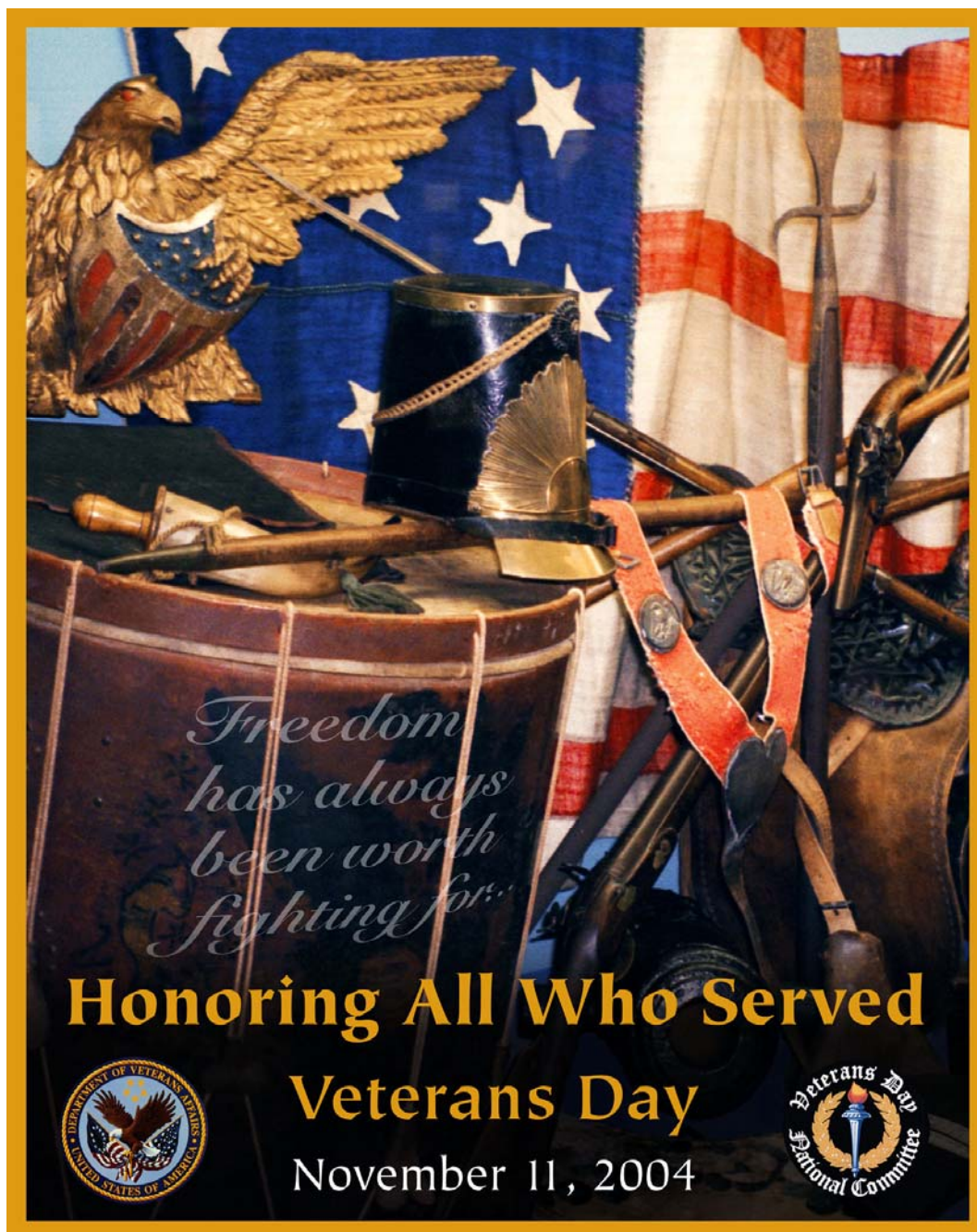
Southeastern Operations

Congratulations to **Rosalind Hunt (Smith)**, Intake Specialist, who was married on August 20, 2004 to Dale Hunt. We wish them much happiness and best wishes.

Congratulations to **Kelly Bonser**, Administrative Assistant, and **Denise Leftridge**, EEO Assistant, on the completion of the self-paced training courses "Controlling a Budget" and "EEO Counseling" from Graduate School, USDA. Ms. Bonser scored a 90% on the course and Ms. Leftridge scored a 94%. They both found these courses well worth the time and effort. Congrats again to both of them.

Important Notice

The citizens of our country expect that we, as VA employees, will not misuse or abuse the resources provided to us to accomplish our mission. As a VA employee, you may have some privilege of "Limited Personal Use" of certain government resources, such as computers, e-mail, Internet access, and telephone/fax service. This benefit is available as long as it does not interfere with official VA business, involves minimal additional expense to the government, and is legal and ethical. Remember that your personal use may be limited at any time either by management or by those responsible for the particular government resource you want to use. (Search for VA Directive 6001 under "Documents" at <http://vaww.ocis.va.gov/> for more information.) Before using this privilege, you should discuss limits and responsibilities with your supervisor and Information Security Officer (ISO).



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